
KRIS
AND
KRISTINA
BY
MARIE BRUCE
PICTURED BY
JAMES DAUGHERTY
DOUBLEDAY PAGE & CO.
GARDEN CITY NEW YORK

for Claire from
Aunt Edna –
Xmas - 1928,

MARK



KRISTINA

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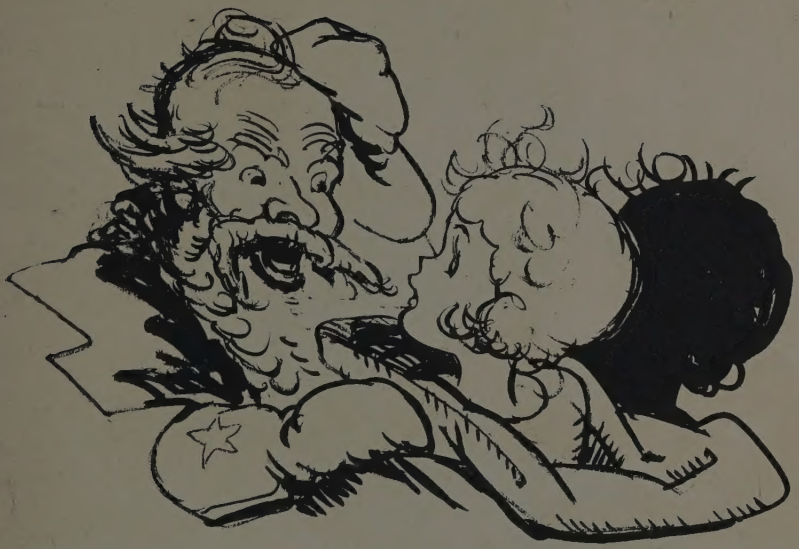
DOUBLEDAY PAGE + CO
GARDEN CITY NEW YORK

TO
MY MOTHER

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KRIS KRINGLE'S WISHES

KRIS KRINGLE was tired, but his heart overflowed with happiness. Christmas had come again. Between midnight and dawn on Christmas Eve, he had traveled all over the world. All night long, while the children slept snug in their beds, he had dashed hither and thither making his Christmas visits. All night long, his eight little reindeer drew his sleigh faster than the wind, so that he might visit every home in every country. All night long, he had hopped in and out of chimneys and, in the twinkling of an eye, filled children's stockings with toys and sweets and candy, until there wasn't a single present left in his pack and not a child in all the world had been forgotten.

Now it was time to hurry home. Soon the sun would



"I WONDER WHAT IT CAN BE!"

come peeping out of the East to light the snow-covered earth and wake the little folks. It would never do to have anyone see him. So, with a "Merry Christmas to all," he jumped into his sleigh and clucked to his reindeer, bidding them hasten. Each, he called by name:

"On, Prancer, on, Dancer, on, Donder and Blitzen!

Up, Dasher! Come, Vixen!

Fly, Cupid! Run, Comet! Be swift—Fly! Fly away home!"

Off the reindeer scampered and scurried. They understood how important it was that Kris Kringle should never be seen.

Kris tucked his great fur robe about him and closed his eyes. The journey this year had been a particularly hard one. There seemed to be so many more children than ever before. Many of them lived in newfangled houses with narrow chimneys in which he almost squeezed himself to death, but somehow he always found a way down and he always left his presents. To-night, he had had to hurry, and hurrying always tired him. Now he was drowsy, too. It would be good to reach his house and settle himself in his big bed for a good snooze. Christmas Day was the only day in the whole year that he could take a good snooze, for every other day he had to be up and at work before dawn.

Even his reindeer were weary. They moved heavily, almost like truck horses. Usually, when they reached the base of the snow-covered path that led to his little mountain cabin, they galloped for joy. But to-night, they just jogged along. Kris could see that they were breathing hard, and it seemed to him that they were quite willing to lie right down in the snow at the foot of the mountain and not go one step farther. They were so tired.

"Now, now, my beauties!" he called cheerily, "at the top

of that mountain, a great Christmas dinner awaits you! Come, come, we're almost home!"

They made an effort, spurting for a few yards, but they were too tired.

"Come, come!" Kris called. "Why, Dasher, you have one eye shut already. Where's your spirit? . . . Prancer, you stumbling? Now, now, don't you know one foot from another?" His eyes twinkled. "Vixen," he called, "what mischief were you up to while I was down in a chimney that you hang your head like that?"

Then he stood up in his sleigh and urged and pleaded with them. Teasingly, he flicked his long whip far, far ahead, so that its tip reached almost to the top of the mountain, and at the same time he whispered in that deep bell-like voice of his:

"Faster! Faster!! . . . Faster!!! . . . It's CHRISTMAS!"

At that call, the reindeer lifted their heads. Bravely they tried their best to run, but now and then they stumbled, and Kris, tired as he was, had to keep a firm hand on the reins. The reindeer were almost exhausted.

Kris realized that this Christmas journey was getting to be a greater undertaking each year. How the world was growing from the days when he first knew it! What a great number of toys each child wanted nowadays! And he not only made all the toys for all the boys and girls, but he delivered them himself. It was a pretty big job for an old man.

Making the toys kept him busy every second, every minute, every hour of the year. But he always tried to make each Christmas even better than the last. He had such great plans for the next year. There were so many new kinds of toys that he wanted to make. He could not see how he was going to make them. A year is so short a time.



Often, he had pondered how he could crowd more work into each second, but he had not yet found a way. Now, he fingered his long flowing beard and tried to make a plan. But, finally, he shook his head.

"I do my best. I never fail the babies or the children. I wouldn't. My little presents, my love means so much to them and to me. I must not fail them. But I wonder how I am going to take care of all of them if each of them wants so many toys?"

Then he sighed. "I wish I had someone to help me!"

No sooner had he made that wish then he realized how impossible it was. Never before in his whole life had he wished for anything for himself. He never would have wished now had it not been to make the children happy.

He knew he could not hire anybody. Anyone he hired



would expect to be paid. He had no money. And he did not know a single soul, except himself, who was willing to work night and day all year round just for love of children. He doubted that any man or woman who ever learned where Kris Kringle lived and kept his treasures would be able to keep the secret all children wanted to know. It seemed that he couldn't have any help.

"I'll manage somehow," he said. "I always have. Ever since the world began, I've made children happy." Again he stroked his beard, and then he smiled.

"I'll manage somehow," he said, "but I do need a sack—a mighty sack that will never wear out—a sack that will hold every toy I make and not be crowded—the biggest sack in the world, but not a bulky one, or it would take up

too much room in my house. I wish I knew where to get a magic sack."

His eyes shone at that thought, and he chirped and clucked again to his reindeer, who were pulling him nearer and nearer to the little mountain cabin that was his home. For years and years he had planned to build a new house, because this cabin was far too small. But he could not spare even a week or a day or an hour to build, because the children wanted so many toys, and he would not disappoint them on Christmas. He would rather work in cramped quarters than have such a thing happen.

Now the reindeer were clambering and jumping over the great snow-covered rocks and getting nearer and nearer the top of the mountain. Now they reached the top, and here he was in his own front yard. There was not a light in the house, and the cabin looked sad and lonely. Kris felt a bit lonely himself. For the first time, he thought how nice it would be if there were only someone there to greet him and hear the tale of all he had seen that night.

He tossed the reins to one side and lumbered heavily out of the sleigh. His feet were heavy; his boots seemed to weigh a ton. His fingers, stiff from cold, were clumsy as he began to unharness. Soon the reindeer were free, and then Kris commanded them cheerily:

"Now for your Christmas dinner!" and waved his hand for them to run away.

Even as he spoke, the reindeer shied and snorted and began to quiver. He had never seen them behave like that. He patted their coats, gave them lumps of sugar, but they crowded about him, nudging and poking at him.

Cupid nozzled against his collar. Prancer poked him gently with her tiny hoof. Vixen took a little nip out of the fur on his sleeve.

"You want to play, do you?" Kris asked. "This isn't the time." They kept pawing at him as though they did not hear. "What's all this?" Kris said. "What's the matter with all of you?"

But they kept up their antics until finally they made him look at his doorstep.

Kris's eyes opened wide. He stared. There on his doorstep was a package—a large package tied with bright red ribbon and addressed to him. He went over and looked at it, touched it to make sure it was real. Then he spied a card tucked in one corner. All the reindeer followed him and peered over his shoulder as he read:

"A Christmas present for Kris Kringle!"

"Hurray! Hurray!" said Kris, throwing his arms about Donder and Blitzen, hugging them. "This is the first time in my jolly old life that anyone ever sent me a present."

The reindeer pawed the snow and stamped their hoofs and made strange noises, urging him to open the package quickly. Dancer nudged him, Comet licked his ear.

"Behave yourself, Comet!" Kris chuckled.

Prancer fidgeted and almost stepped on his foot. Cupid rubbed his cheek.

Kris couldn't help laughing at their impatience.

"See here!" he said. "It's my present, isn't it? Can't I take my time?" But he began to untie the great bow of ribbon. "I wonder what it can be?" he said. "I wonder!"

Now he was taking the paper off. Now he opened the box. Nearer and nearer crowded the reindeer, each one trying to be the first one to see this present. Finally, Kris lifted the last layer of tissue paper, and then, great was his amazement, for one wish had been fulfilled. In the box lay a sack—a sack shaped like a stocking. When he touched it, it got bigger and bigger! He clapped his hands

for joy, and the reindeer danced. Then he saw that where the seam of the stocking should be, there was a zipper fastener. Dasher tried to open the lock.

"No, no," said Kris, "I'll do that!"

Then he pulled the lock and opened the stocking, but before he had it open very wide, he heard a voice—a sweet voice—the sweetest voice he had ever heard. It was like the warble of the birds, like the music of a brook running over pebbles. It was a glad voice, lilting and joyous:

"Merry Christmas, Kris Kringle!" the voice said, and then, out from the heel of the stocking, there came a wee little lady, the prettiest, loveliest little lady that Kris had ever seen. An exquisitely beautiful little lady, dainty as a flower. Her eyes were very large and very blue. They made him think of wood violets. They were fringed by long curly black lashes. The colour in her cheeks was the soft pink of apple blossoms, and her mouth was like a tiny rosebud. It turned up at the corners in quite the most adorable smile. Her nose was pert. It turned up too, and gave her a mischievous expression which made her seem even lovelier. But the most entrancing thing about her was her hair. It was white, lustrous like polished silver. It was wound sleekly round her little head, but little ringlets escaped and fell over her temples and near her tiny ears and at the nape of her creamy white neck. Her eyes twinkled when she saw Kris staring at her.

"Merry Christmas!" she repeated, and then Kris found his voice.

"Who are you?" he asked, amazed and delighted.

"My name is Kristina," she said.

"Are you real?"

"I'm as real as you are. I'm the Spirit of the Woodland and the Snow."



"MY NAME IS KRISTINA"

Kris suddenly remembered to take off his cap. He made a deep bow, and when she offered her hand, he took it in his. She had the softest, whitest little hand, with slender tapering fingers and dimples like babies have.

"Why haven't I ever seen you before?" Kris asked.

"I've been waiting for ages in the Great Beyond," Kristina said, "for you to wish for help. You never wished until to-night, but here I am! I've come to be your wife, to help you and make you happy!"

Kris couldn't think of what to say to show her how glad he was, but she read his thoughts and tucked her hand under his arm.

"Do you like the sack?" she asked. "It's a magic sack. It will never wear out. It will grow large when you want it large, and it will get as small as my handkerchief." She flitted a tiny wisp of a handkerchief daintily.

Kris laughed. He was very, very happy.

"The sack is wonderful," he replied. "I am delighted with it, and I thank you, but," he added, with his most courtly bow, "I am more thrilled and more delighted that such a charming lady should come to be my wife!"

"You must not flatter me, Kris!" she responded. "Your reindeer are waiting to be introduced."

One by one, Kris then introduced his eight reindeer, and Kristina patted each one. She was so very tiny that she couldn't reach up to their heads, but the reindeer leaned down, and when her tiny hand touched them, they wagged their ears and whinnied. Kris then bade them go to their dinner, and he and Kristina took the sack and went into his house. Kris carried Kristina over the doorsill.

"Luck for our marriage!" he said. "This isn't much of a place for you, my dear, but some day we'll have a nicer house!"

"It's our home, Kris," Kristina answered softly. She looked about, and, as any woman would, she saw many signs of neglect. "It's time you admitted you needed help. If you have an apron handy, I'll start right now getting the place cleaned up and in order. You need a good sleep!"

Kris tried to find excuses, but Kristina sent him off to bed, and then she started her house-cleaning. When Kris woke up late that afternoon, the house was shining and clean as a pin. There was coffee on the stove in the kitchen, and hot biscuits in the oven.

"You're a treasure!" he said, kissing her for the first time. "You really will be a great help!"

While he ate his breakfast, he told her about his work and all the toys he wanted to make. He told her about the children, the little babies, the toddling babies, the ones who were just starting to go to school, and those whom he had known for many years.

"I've never seen a child!" Kristina said wistfully. "You are the only person I've ever seen. Will you show me some children, Kris?"

"I only see them once a year myself," Kris answered.

"But next Christmas you'll take me with you, won't you?" Kristina asked.

Kris was silent for a moment. His eyes were sad.

"My dear, I'd love to take you, but I can't unless you discover my secret. You'll have to find out for yourself. I can't tell you that secret!" Kristina pouted a little.

"Can't you give me even a hint?" she asked. "Maybe I could guess!"

"Well, it's something to do with—Christmas. It's the spirit of Christmas! That's all I may tell you!"

Kristina laughed gaily.

"You're the Spirit of Christmas, Kris," she said.

"But why, my little wife? Why? That's what you have to discover."

"If I do, you'll take me next Christmas Eve?" Kristina asked. "Promise."

"I couldn't keep you from going, then," he said.

Kristina clapped her tiny little hands. She danced about the room. "I'll find it out! I'll find it out!" she sang. "I'll learn your secret before Christmas Eve!"

"I wonder whether you will," Kris said, and then he leaned back comfortably in his chair and smoked his pipe.





THE EAST WIND



THE SPECIAL MESSENGERS

NEVER had Kris known such a happy, happy Christmas. Usually, on Christmas Day, when all the rest of the world made merry and had their jollifications, he was alone. Now, he had someone to whom he could talk—someone with whom he could share his pleasures. Before the great fireplace in which a log fire crackled and burned cheerily, he and Kristina sat. Contentedly, he puffed away at his pipe and told her stories about his friends, the children. He had ever so many things to relate. Kristina's eyes shone when he described the little folk. She had her sewing basket near at hand, and Kris had made her a little rocking chair, so that now she rocked back and forth and plied her needle daintily. It gave Kris a great

thrill to see her there making herself at home, mending his socks and sewing buttons on his shirts.

She asked him so many questions! He had to tell her how people lived in different countries, and she didn't even know how big the world was! Once she put down her work and looked at him in astonishment.

"You really mean, Kris, that there isn't a child in all the world who does not know about you? In America—in England—in France—in Germany?"

Kris nodded his head slowly.

"Yes, even in the Fiji Islands and in Alaska and up among the Eskimos, I go."

"What I can't understand," Kristina said thoughtfully, "is how you find out what the children really want. If nobody knows your address, how do they send you word?"

Kris emptied out his pipe and reached for his pouch.

"Well," he said, "in the first place, thousands, yes, millions, of children write me letters. Sometime, I'll show you some of their letters, Kristina. They are most amusing. Little people do think of the most extraordinary things!"

"But how do you get those letters?" she persisted.

"It doesn't matter how they are addressed, just so my name is on the envelope," Kris said. "Postmen in all parts of the world try their best to find me, but really it is my own special messengers who bring those letters. You didn't know I had special messengers, did you, my dear? Well, I'll tell you the secret." He leaned down and whispered: "My postmen are the Four Winds—the North Wind, the South Wind, the East Wind, the West Wind!"

"Kris, Kris, how wonderful!" exclaimed Kristina.

"It is wonderful, my dear. For the Winds bring me not only letters but wishes. If a little girl, rich or poor, it

makes no difference, just goes to the window and whispers to the Wind, I get a message. Lots of the poor children are cold and hungry and oftentimes have no clothes. The Winds learn about them, and that's why I always have to have such a great stock of nice new clothes ready long before it is time for my trip. Occasionally, the raindrops bring me word, too, and a few weeks before Christmas, I send out my emergency men."

"Now, who can they be?" Kristina asked.

Kris's eyes twinkled. He was having such fun telling Kristina these secrets.

"The snowflakes," he said. "Didn't you ever notice that it never snows in summertime?"

"Will the Winds bring you messages all through the year?" she asked.

"Certainly. And you are going to have a chance to meet one of these postmen very, very soon, for, if you listen carefully, you will hear a rumble getting louder and louder. That means that the North Wind is approaching. He is very early this year. I do hope he's not coming to say that I forgot anyone."

Just then there was a very loud noise outside, and suddenly the door was flung wide open, and gustily the North Wind entered.

He was a thin wiry man with a long face and a long nose. All over him there was frost, and he looked chilled to the bone. His beard and hair were icicles. His face was blue-white. His voice was shrill. He rubbed his hands, but they looked as though they had no blood in them. He crossed right to the fire but looked at Kris.

"Hail, Kris Kringle!" he said. "Every child in the world is singing your praises to-day. They sent me to tell you that you have made them very happy."



THE NORTH WIND

"That's good news," Kris replied. "And I suppose they began making wishes for next year even before their stockings were emptied?"

The North Wind left the fire and began to bluster about Kristina.

"Well," he said, "they all have so many of your funny dolls, your rag dolls with droll expressions, your trick dolls that look and act so like themselves, that even they can't think of any more like that. But I did overhear some of them talking!"

"What about?" Kris asked, leaning forward.

"They were hoping that next year you might bring them—a fairy doll! They want a doll that's dainty, and very, very beautiful like a Princess." He looked at Kristina very pointedly. "I would suggest a doll with sparkling, shimmering, lustrous silver hair; with a lovely face and great violet eyes——"

Kris laughed out loud. "You're a strange old fellow, North Wind," he said. "It seems to me you're describing my wife. Kristina, may I present the strongest and bravest of all my messengers?"

Kristina smiled and offered her hand. The North Wind touched it gallantly. His touch made it a bright pink.

"Yes, I'm married now," Kris said. "It's lucky children don't understand your bluster, or you'd be telling the news before I had a chance to tell it myself. However, you have given me an idea. I'm sure that the children would love a doll that looked like Kristina. I'll try to make one!"

The North Wind, still shivering, blew toward the door.

"Good luck to you," he shrilled in his squeaky voice. "But, Kris, I doubt that even you could make a doll as beautiful as Mrs. Kris Kringle!"

Without waiting for an answer, he swung open the door and hastened away.

This visit from the North Wind reminded Kris that it was time for him and Kristina to make some plans for their work.

"I want to help you every way I can, Kris," she said softly. "I wonder whether you could teach me how to make dolls?"

"Of course I can!" he answered. "It's not very hard."

"Have you any models or patterns?"

"I don't need them. What I do is just think about some delightful or amusing little girl or boy I've seen, and then I make a doll."

"But," Kristina insisted, "you seem to forget that I've never seen a boy or a girl. You're the only person I've ever met!"

Kris reached into the drawer of his long work table and drew out some coloured crayons and a piece of paper. "I'll draw some pictures for you," he said, and Kristina came and sat near him. "Here's a little tot fast asleep. Doesn't she look like an angel?"

"How long her lashes are!" Kristina whispered.

"Her ear is like a tiny shell, and there are dimples at her knees and here in her fingers."

"Isn't she adorable? Oh, Kris, draw some more please! Please! Please!"

And so, far into the night, Kris drew pictures of his friends. Now it was a little Jap with slant eyes and such short wiry black hair. Now a rollicking little boy in jumpers. Now a flaxen-haired sprite with the most delightful smile. The more he drew, the more delighted Kristina was.

They agreed finally that, from now on, Kris would make all the things for boys—the sleds and the hobbyhorses and

the soldiers and the horns and the machines and the express wagons and the scooters and the automobiles and the airplanes and the footballs and the baseballs and the bats that all boys love. Kristina would make the dolls and the doll clothes.

"I know you'll do it better than I do," Kris said. "Sometimes my fingers get so clumsy. And when I'm trying to sew on those very dainty things, I sometimes think it really isn't a man's task!"

Kristina beamed.

"That's why you wished for help, isn't it? And that's why I came!" She patted his hand with her tiny fingers.

"I'll make the candy too, if you like," she offered, but Kris shook his head.

"My dear, we'll do that together. To tell you the truth, I love the smell of candy when it's cooking, and the pulling of taffy is one of my great sports. Some day, if I ever do get time enough to build a new house, I'll have a huge kitchen, for I need room for that taffy pulling!"

Kristina bobbed her head like a bird. Her eyes glistened. Even though this was the third or fourth time since she had come that Kris had mentioned the need for a new house, she didn't say anything. But she did think, and then she began to plan a surprise for him. She had secrets, too, power that Kris had not guessed. She wondered whether he would tell her his secret if she made him very beautiful dolls. It really did seem that he ought to tell her about the Spirit of Christmas. She hadn't found the answer yet. She didn't know how to set about finding out. Her curiosity was growing more and more lively every minute.

It was noontime the next day when, suddenly, the cabin began to shake like a leaf. It seemed as though it were going to be blown to pieces. For hours, Kris had been at work, and



THE WEST WIND

while he wielded his chisel and his hammer and his saw with a will, he whistled and sang the merriest and jolliest of tunes. Kristina was blissful, for her first dolls had won praise from Kris, and now she was making filmy doll clothes and tying little ribbons and shirring bits of lace for caps. But, suddenly, the windows flew open and there was a great breeze. It was cold and hot and soft and balmy and icy all at the same time.

"All the Four Winds are coming to call," Kris said, laying aside his tools. "I never heard such a rumpus!"

Then, swirling, whistling, thundering, fluttering, the Four Winds came in the door. Kristina could tell instantly which was which. The East Wind brought the perfumes of spices and sandalwood. The West Wind was bronzed and stalwart and hearty and had a rumbling sound in his voice. But the South Wind, he was young and smooth-faced and rather lazy even in his stride.

"Come in, come in," Kris said. "You all seem very excited!"

"No wonder," shrilled the North Wind. "We've come to warn you. Men are wandering all over the earth in search of gold and treasure!"

"Some want excitement and adventure!" the South Wind drawled in a soft whisper.

"Nothing daunts them!" the West Wind rumbled. "The harder the journey, the more determined they are."

"I'm afraid for you, Kris," cackled the North Wind shaking his long finger. "The first thing you know, some daring young jackanapes will set out to find you!"

"Oh, do you really think so?" Kristina asked. "Wouldn't that be exciting!"

Kris smiled patiently at her, but addressed himself to the visitors.

"Kristina does not understand how important it is that no one learn where I live. She's only been here such a short time. But I think you are all worrying about nothing. I believe I'm safe because this mountain of mine is so steep and so very, very high that no mere man could ever scale it!"

"Humph!" grumbled the North Wind. "Mere men are flying across the Atlantic in a day now!"

Kris knitted his brows. This news was just a bit disturbing.

"Thanks very much for warning me," he said. "I'll keep a sharp lookout."

The Winds said their good-byes and away they went, but Kristina noticed that Kris did not whistle now. Instead, he worked hard and fast and in silence.

It was five o'clock when Kris went out to feed his reindeer. At his whistle, Dasher, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donder, and Blitzen all came running, but Dancer was missing. Kris called and halloed to her, but she did not appear. Leaving the feed for the others, he set off in search of her.

It was a full half hour before he spied her. She was wandering down the mountain-side, turning this way and that. She was lost. She didn't know what to do or how to get home again. Stupidly, she had chosen the very steepest and slippiest side of the mountain, and her thin little legs almost snapped off as she stumbled and slipped from one rock to another.

Kris called to her, but she did not hear him. He jumped nimbly from rock to rock; he bounded up great boulders and slid down their sides. He thrust himself in among the bushes and the giant weeds that were almost as tall as a hedge, and he didn't care a whit about all the scratches and bruises he received. He tumbled and rolled in the snow and pushed his

way through the drifts. Once his long white beard, of which he was so proud, caught on a thorny bush, and he had to tear it to get it loose. But on he rushed, pell-mell, until he rescued Dancer.

When he reached her, she was trembling with fear. He smoothed her coat and patted her neck and then gave her a lump of sugar. He was glad to rest a minute and get his breath. His eyes roved, and then, suddenly, he discovered strange objects moving about stealthily in the valley below. Men! Adventurers whom the Four Winds had warned him about. They were surely going to try to scale his mountain. If they did, they would find him and his Christmas toys and his magic pack and—Kristina!

Instantly, he decided that he must move. Quickly, he led Dancer back to the shed and gave her her food. Then he hurried into the house. Kristina looked up from her sewing, and, at the troubled expression on his face, she asked:

"Kris, Kris, what's the matter?"

"My dear, we have to move. Those adventurers are looking for me. They are very near. We can't spare even a day. We must move as fast as we can."

While he was telling her this, he was piling up his tools and his benches and the toys he had already made.

"Where will we go?" Kristina asked. She was very excited about making a trip.

Kris shook his head. "I don't quite know, but I must find some place where I can build me a house and be safe for all time. Moving about wastes a great deal of time."

Kristina was folding up her laces and silks and satins and ginghams and putting fresh tissue paper neatly about the dolls she had made.

"Kris, wouldn't it be lovely if we could live somewhere near the children you love?" she asked.



THE SOUTH WIND

"No, indeed," Kris answered. "Little folk are curious, and they would keep pestering me with questions about what I was making for Christmas. If I told them, then there wouldn't be any surprise for Christmas!"

Kristina's eyes twinkled and she laughed a tinkling little laugh.

"Oh, now I know your secret! Now I know what the Christmas Spirit is—it's surprise!" she announced gleefully, doing a most entrancing little dance about the room.

"No, it isn't," Kris laughed. "Don't think you're going to catch me napping and telling you, either. But it's something far greater, far sweeter than surprise!"

"But it is something to do with children, isn't it? Oh, Kris, how can I ever discover the secret of Christmas unless I see some children?"

"Some day, if you wish very hard to find out, it may come to you. I feel sure it will, and I'm sorry I can't tell you, but really, dear, I can't."

Kristina didn't say more, but Kris talked all the time he was collecting his things.

"Do you know there are some children—just a few, I'll admit, but some who don't believe there is a Kris Kringle?" he asked. "Many mothers and fathers have wanted me to come and live near them so that their children could see me!"

Kristina stroked his cheek.

"Don't feel badly, Kris, about those boys and girls! Look at me—there—don't you think the little folk would like to see me, too?"

He pinched her cheek with his sturdy fingers, and he laughed once more.

"If they ever knew such a lovely person lived, why, I don't know how they could help wishing," he answered. "But, seriously, can you imagine any child or even a grown

person who would hang up a stocking on Christmas Eve and lie open-eyed in the dark, listening to each tiny noise just to catch one peep at—the man who lived next door?"

"No, it would be ridiculous!" Kristina responded.

Kris put out the fire. "We'll go far, far away from children," he said. "I'll try to find some place where most of the year round it is bitter cold, where the snow is deep and glistening, shimmering white; where the Four Winds can come and play their boisterous games; where the frost is heavy, the air so like ice that one's breath turns into icicles! Would you like that?"

Kristina's eyes shone.

"I know just the very place," she whispered softly.

"Where?"

"Oh, it's at the very end of the world," she replied gaily. "But I won't tell you anything about it yet. It's a surprise. Let me show you!"

"Oho!" sang Kris merrily, "you have a secret, too, eh?"

Kristina tossed her head and winked at him pertly.

"Of course I have! Did you forget that I'm a Spirit?"

And then they took each other's hands and danced a bit, and Kris noticed that the sun was hidden and the stars beginning to shine in the sky.

"We must hurry!" he said. "Where's the magic sack?"



THE MOVING

KRISTINA opened a drawer and took from it the magic sack. It was still as small as her tiny handkerchief, but when she handed it to Kris, it began to grow.

"Will you please put the toys in the sack?" Kris asked. "I'll have to crate all our furniture and my work bench and the stools and your rocking chair."

"Put them right in here!" Kristina commanded with an important air. "This sack will hold everything!"

Kris did not stop to voice any doubts. He lifted the great work bench on his shoulders, and the minute it touched the sack, the sack grew. There was room for their beds, their kitchen stove, their chairs—everything, even Kris's clothes and Kristina's belongings. And on the very

top of all these things, Kristina placed the toys they had made. Then Kris pulled the zipper fastener to the top.

"Kristina, that sack is the most wonderful thing I've ever seen!" he said. "Once more, let me thank you for bringing it!"

Kristina flitted about gaily. Kris left to get his reindeer and the sleigh. The minute he went into the shed where the reindeer were lolling about, all the animals crowded about him.

"We've got to make another trip," he said, and they all shook their heads and stared at him. "I know you never make but one trip a year, but now it's different. Kristina and I are going to find a new home! You wouldn't disappoint her, would you? You wouldn't let men find me and find my toys, would you?"

They neighed and snorted most emphatically, and soon he had them harnessed and dragging the sleigh before the house. On the doorstep, Kristina was waiting. She had a warm muffler in her hand.

"Here, Kris, you must put this on," she advised. "You've got your warm mittens, haven't you?"

"Yes, dear, and now, if you'll hop into the sleigh, we're ready to start." Kristina gave him her hand, and he lifted her tenderly up to the front seat. Then, carefully, he tucked warm rugs and blankets about her, and he called to his reindeer:

"Come, Dasher! Dancer! Prancer! Vixen! Comet! Cupid! Donder! Blitzen! To the North, to the North, my beauties!"

Kristina waved her little hand over the reindeer and she said: "To the end of the World, to the end of the World for a new home for Kris Kringle!"

The reindeer kicked up their spindly little legs and galloped off. Kristina cuddled close to Kris. When the

reindeer dashed down the mountain-side and skirted the valley below, she asked:

"Will we see any children, Kris?"

"All the children are in bed now," he told her.

"Couldn't we stop and have a peek at them?" she asked.

"It is only on Christmas Eve I may enter houses," he answered.

But Kristina kept hoping; as long as she could keep her eyes open, she kept watching for some child to appear. But this was her first sleigh ride, and the reindeer went so fast that soon she fell asleep. Not long after that, Kris felt he couldn't stay awake any longer. His fingers were stiff, his bones ached, and he could feel the reins slipping from his fingers. The merry tinkle of the reindeer bells grew fainter and fainter to his ears. That music was a lullaby. He slept.





THE MAGIC FOREST

IT WAS dusk of the next day when Kris woke up. The reindeer had suddenly stopped. The evening star gleamed pallid in a deep blue sky. Frosty air kissed his cheek, and the stillness was so great that he could hear his own heart beat loud as an alarm clock.

He looked at Kristina. She was still sleeping like a baby. He hoped his heartbeats would not make enough noise to waken her. He wanted a few minutes to look about him and to explore this strange new place.

The reindeer had halted in the heart of a deep, deep forest—the mightiest, densest forest that Kris had ever dreamed of. Snow covered all the land, and a wide circle of towering, snow-capped mountains that looked like great

sugar loaves hemmed in the forest on all sides. In the purple twilight, he caught the glassy gleam of a winding river locked in ice. He looked about very carefully. Nowhere was there any sign of a child. And there wasn't a house or a barn or a railroad station or a school within hundreds and hundreds of miles, he felt sure. There wasn't even a road that led to this beautiful spot. For a second, Kris wondered how the reindeer had ever got here, and then he remembered Kristina's call to them:

"To the end of the World, to the end of the World!"

Kristina then had great power. She had known that at the very edge of the world lay this forest. Only she, the Spirit of the Woodland and the Snow, knew about it.

He felt strangely grateful to her, and looked at her lovingly. Taking great care, however, not to waken her, he gently pulled aside the robes, the rugs, and blankets and jumped from the sleigh. The snow was as high as his waist, and it was all glistening and the purest white. Everything in sight was white except the trees. They were evergreen. He walked among them, admiring them from all sides. Even though it was bitter cold, he drew off his mittens and placed his bare palm against these gnarled old trunks. Caressingly, he stroked each one, and then he heard Kristina stirring and calling to him: "Kris, we are in the Woodlands! I can hear the great trees welcoming me."

Kris went back to the sleigh, and, taking Kristina in his arms, he lifted her high on his shoulder. Kristina waved her hand and in the gladdest voice she sang:

"Mighty trees of this wonderful forest, I have brought you the most popular man in the world! Everybody loves him! I have brought him here to you! Salute him! Bid him welcome!"

The great trees waved their big branches and their little



THE INTRODUCTION

branches and the pine needles danced, and some of them even skipped down and patted Kris on the shoulder. They brought with them the most delightful perfume, and Kris was very much impressed. "Kristina," he said, "Your trees are exceedingly handsome!"

Kristina blew him a kiss, and she said, in a clear, tinkling voice that reached to the very edges of the forest:

"Kris, what is mine is yours! Now these trees are your trees!"

Kris lifted her down from his shoulder, took off his cap, and bowed gallantly to her and then to the trees.

"You'd better put on your cap again," said Kristina, with a most motherly air. And, in high spirits, Kris then replaced his cap.

Kristina tugged at his hand and said, "Come, I must show you all the treasures of this forest. Here is holly—see how green and shiny its leaves are."

"And how vivid the red berries," said Kris.

"And here is mistletoe in abundance," declared Kristina.

"My dear," Kris said tenderly. "These have always been my favorite decorations for Christmas, but I never thought I would find a place where they were all year round."

Kristina laughed joyously. "Wait, and you will see how beautifully I can arrange holly and mistletoe, for now that I know that you love them so much, they shall be my favorites, too."

Suddenly, she caught her breath.

"I've made you happy, Kris?," she asked.

"Very happy, my dear," he replied. "I have never seen such an enchanting place."

There was a mischievous little twitch at the corners of Kristina's smiling mouth, and in her eyes there was a teasing little twinkle.

"I thought you wanted to build a house," she said. "Don't you think it's time to begin?"

Kris's eyes fell, and he was silent for a minute. Then he shook his head. "My dear, trees like this live and breathe and give happiness. I couldn't sacrifice them."

Kristina nodded her head slowly and quietly, and behind Kris's back she winked up at the greatest of the trees.

"Well, Kris," she said, with a sigh, "it does look as though you have to find some place, doesn't it?"

"Yes," said Kris, and without another word took her back to the sleigh, tucked her in again, and sat beside her. Overhead, stars sprinkled the sky, and the moon was a great silver disk. Kris held Kristina in his arms tighter and tighter. He tucked his own fur-lined coat about her, and even unwound his own muffler to put it round her little ears and keep them from getting nipped. And then he reached for the reins, and just as he started to call to his reindeer that there was still further work for them to do, Kristina waved her little hand. Then a strange sound broke the mighty stillness. It was a most mysterious sound, an eerie sound. It was as though something were cracking and jerking and snapping and pulling and bursting. It was a rending, ripping, tearing sound, and Kris did not know where it came from. Suddenly, he saw a great spruce, old and weather-beaten and hardy and strong, but withal majestic as a king, pulling itself up out of the earth! It tugged and yanked at its own roots, and slowly it rose. And then the sound was repeated, and a pine tree, graceful and tall, raised itself from out of the earth. Flecks of snow and frozen earth, it dashed to one side. And the noise grew louder and louder and louder. Gnarled old hemlocks dislodged themselves with a clamour that was almost ear-splitting.

But still more marvelous than this sight was what

followed. For as each tree uprooted itself, its roots swept away the snow as nicely as any new broom would, and soon there was a clear space. Kris clutched Kristina's little hand in his. "Kristina," he whispered, "this is a magic forest!" Kristina nodded her little head three times, and then she smiled and nodded at the trees which were still "hanging" in the air. And then she clapped her hands, and instantly these great trees, these mighty trees, began to dance and whirl and spin about. And finally, somehow, they all ranged themselves into a position that no tree in the world had ever taken before by itself. Wondrously, by the great power of Kristina's magic, before Kris's own eyes, they built the new house he had always longed for.





THE MAGIC HOUSE

KRIS'S heart sang. Oh, what toys he would make here, and what marvelous dolls Kristina would fashion! What a great Christmas he would give the children this coming year! The thought of it made him clap his hands and toss his cap about, but, even in this moment of great joy, he remembered to be polite. He bowed again to the trees.

"Let's go inside, Kris," suggested Kristina. And they started toward the house. The front door had been made by three giant hemlocks, and it looked very strong. But when Kristina touched it with the tip of her finger, it swung open easily. Kris followed her into the hallway, which extended clear to the back of the house. There was a door in the hall

at the left. Lifting her skirts daintily, Kristina edged one tiny slippered foot over the threshold, and then she wagged her finger at Kris, bidding him look.

"What a kitchen!" said Kris. "What candy I shall make here! It is big, but it is cosy and homelike."

"Yes," said Kristina, "and here is a space for your stove, and here we can put the refrigerator that we have in the magic pack."

"Splendid!" enthused Kris. "Now I have room for all the sugar plums and the lollipops!"

"Won't our copper pots and pans gleam prettily against these old tree trunks?" Kristina asked.

"If you'd like to use one corner of this kitchen for our dining room," Kris said, "I'll put right here that extra chest for linen."

"I think," said Kristina, "that I shall hang dainty little sash curtains of cross-bar muslin at the windows, and perhaps a gay red-and-white gingham would be nice for overcurtains."

"Come, let us see the rest of the house," she urged him.

They went again into the hallway, and then breathlessly into the next room, the bedroom. It was warm and bright now, as the sun peeked in. The branches of the trees of the forest seemed almost to be reaching in through the window space like welcoming hands.

"Kristina, Kristina," murmured Kris. "It's charming!"

"Wait till you see our living room, our workroom!" Kristina exclaimed. Then, quickly, she led him into the biggest room in the house. It was a bright room, a cheery room, and, wonder of wonders, here the trees had even outdone themselves. Here the walls were not merely the soft warm brown of tree trunks! Instead, the branches of the trees had woven a beautiful wall paper! And the floor! Kris

caught his breath and closed his eyes, for the friendly pine needles must have danced about with fairies before they made this velvety soft carpet. On all three sides of the room, there were great window spaces, and how sweet the air was, with a clean, fresh smell of pine, the tang of spruce, and the fragrance of hemlock! Kris drank deep drafts of this wonderful perfume, and Kristina buried her little face in the trees that made the wall paper and kissed them.

Kris put his arms around her and he said, "Kristina, you have made me very, very happy. I wish I knew a way to show you how glad I am!"

"Why don't you tell me your Christmas secret?" she asked, coyly, and then her eyes grew sad just for a second, and she said, "You know, Kris, I do so want to know about the Spirit of Christmas."

Kris looked down. Kristina had never seen him look so sad.

"My dear, you must discover it for yourself. I'd love to help you, but I can't." And then, without another word, he lumbered out of the room like a very old man.

Kristina did not follow him immediately. Her brow puckered and her eyes were very thoughtful. "It does seem as though I'll never find out by myself," she said out loud, "but I am going to try, and keep trying."

Then she ran out quickly to the sleigh where Kris had just hefted the magic sack on to his broad shoulder.

"Let's get settled, Kris, just as fast as we can," she urged, in that lilting voice of hers, and Kris's face brightened to see that she was smiling again.

Into the house he carried the magic sack, and from it he took first the toys, and then his work bench, and then his stool, and Kristina's rocking chair, and the footstool she liked to use, and her sewing machine. Near the fireplace,



AT HOME

which he had brought from his old cabin, and which he now set up in the living room, he placed Kristina's rocker and his own easy chair. By noontime, the whole house was in order, and then they both settled down to the task of making toys. Just as he started his work, Kris glanced outdoors, and there were his reindeer, nestling into a sort of cave which the trees must have told them about, or made for them, because Kris had not seen it before.

Kris began to sing as he made the runners for a sled, and Kristina, sorting over her silks and her satins and her chiffons and her laces, suddenly began to sing, too. She had the sweetest singing voice. It was like a song of the lark, and Kris's heart went thump, thump, to hear such music. So they worked happily, and during that day and many days that followed, Kris told Kristina of the wonder places of the world that he had seen on his many trips.

"I have been in countries where there never has been any snow, where all year round vivid flowers bloom. Even on Christmas, it is very hot there. I have been to China—India—Mexico, and, oh, the things I've seen!"

"What part of the world did you like best, Kris?" she inquired.

"I loved it all, because everywhere there were children."

Kris looked at her out of the corner of his eye, and he leaned forward expectantly. But Kristina did not catch his meaning. It seemed very foolish to her that he should say he did not like one place better than another.

"I'm sure," she said, "that when I see children, there will be some whom I will like better than all the others."

"Well," said Kris, "I like them all the same, rich and poor, pretty or homely, I love them."

"Why, Kris Kringle," Kristina remonstrated, "if you

like all the children alike, why do you make so many, many extra toys for the poor children?"

Kris closed one eye, and he looked very, very wise as he leaned toward her.

"So many other people, mothers, fathers, cousins, aunts, and uncles, give the rich little boy or girl so many things, but I am almost the only one who tries to shower presents on the poor little dears who have no mothers, no fathers, no cousins, no aunts, and no uncles."

It was almost suppertime, so Kristina went out into the kitchen. But while she put on the tea and made the muffins and sliced the butter, and opened the jam pot, she said to herself: "I wonder how I can find out that secret. I never was so curious in my life. What on earth can it be?"





THE EXTRA ROOMS

BEFORE the end of the first week, Kris had made so many toys and Kristina had made so many dolls that the workroom, big as it was, was overflowing. Kris had tucked rabbits and dogs and elephants and teddy bears and monkeys and baby giraffes among the branches that made the wall paper. He had hung balloons and airplanes from his ceiling, and the floor was almost completely covered with scooters and automobiles and express cars. Kristina had dolls everywhere, even in the most extraordinary places. Now there wasn't a single place for another toy. Kris was happy, for Kristina had proved to be an amazing help.

That night at dinner, however, Kristina noticed that



HOME-MADE ICE CREAM

Kris scarcely touched a mouthful of the delicious dinner she had prepared. She wondered what could be the matter with him. When he refused his favorite dessert, she lifted her eyebrows.

"Why, Kris Kringle, that's home-made ice cream!" she said.

Kris quickly reached for his spoon.

"So it is! My word! And how good it looks!" he said. But he took only a spoonful or two.

Kristina didn't urge him any further, for she felt that he wasn't quite himself. He took his pipe from the shelf and, filling the bowl with tobacco, he went to the front door. Kristina noticed that to-night he did not blow smoke rings. She hurried with her work and followed him.

"Kris," she asked very kindly, "won't you tell me what's troubling you?"

"I'm wondering," he said, "where I shall put all the new toys I make. The house is full now."

"Kris, don't worry. Let's go for a nice walk in the moonlight." So, to please her, Kris bundled himself up in his great coat and helped Kristina into hers, and they started out into the clear frosty night. Just when they opened the front door, a tiny branch from the wall fluttered against Kristina's cheek and out it blew toward the forest. It flew straight to the mightiest of all the trees and the great tree nodded and its branches fluttered. Then all the other trees nodded and waved their branches and it seemed as though all the forest nodded a great "yes-yes." Kristina ran along the path, holding up her dainty little skirts and playing a game to cheer Kris. Finally, when she got Kris dancing too, she bade him look up, and now he saw that the trees were waving their branches, and then, suddenly, there was a swishing, pushing noise, and soon little young trees

came dancing and jumping about. They edged their way closer and closer to the house, and finally attached themselves to one side of the living room.

"Kristina, Kristina, your trees have built a new room for us and for our toys and our dolls. Hurray!"

Quickly, they both went back into the house, and soon they had moved most of the toys into this new room. And so, time after time, as the weeks and the months passed, another room was added to the magic house magically.

By the time the snowflakes came to report to Kris and set about bringing him those last-minute wishes of children, the house was bigger than an apartment house, bigger than a hotel, bigger than a railroad station, and bigger than any city. It was a gigantic place, and every nook and corner was filled with toys. As he strode from room to room, overlooking his treasures, Kris said to Kristina:

"Excellent, excellent! This year I can take so many, many surprises to the poor children who, you notice, do not ask me for very many toys, but whom I love to surprise. One part of that magic sack will hold these toys."

"But," said Kristina, "I thought you were keeping that part just for the dolls that look like me?"

"Many of them will go there, my dear, for," he added, touching her silvery hair with his forefinger, "no child who had a doll like you could ever cry or be sad or know any unhappiness. You have brought me such joy that I am sure dolls like you will bring joy to my little friends."

"It's getting very near Christmas," Kristina said. "Are you really going to leave me here alone in an empty house, all night, while you go traveling around the world? Don't you think there's some way you could take me with you?"

Kris looked at her a long, long time.

"Why do you want to go, Kristina?" he asked. "Just because you never made the trip?"

"Of course not," she answered. "It's because I think so much of you."

Kris shook his head, and off he went to see his reindeer.

His pets were growing restive, for they, too, were counting the days. Kris went into their little cave, and he sat down among them, and, as he handed out lumps of sugar to them, he said:

"Kristina loves me, she loves you, she loves the forest. Does she love the little folk? Does she love all children, white, black, brown, yellow, poor, rich, pretty, homely? Will she ever discover the secret of Christmas? Will she discover it in time for me to take her with me?"





THE WORK SHOP



THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

AND then December 24th came! The day before Christmas! All day long, there was a hustle and a bustle about the house, for at the last minute it seemed that there were still many things to do.

Long before sunrise, they had their breakfast. Then Kristina began to get Kris's clothes ready for the journey. She took out his warmest flannels and his best boots, his heavy knitted socks, and, from the special chest, his very best suit. Her tiny nose always crinkled up when she sniffed the camphor, and she ran quickly out the back door to hang the suit in the cold air. The great task was the big coat, the fur-lined coat of which Kris was so very proud. It was a very beautiful coat, and Kristina handled it lovingly. She

loved its rich, warm color—red. It made her think of cranberries.

She brushed it till her arms ached, and when she had finished, it looked just like new. Into its great pockets she tucked two large handkerchiefs and his best driving mittens. Then she hung it on a hook in the hallway where Kris could get it when he was ready to go. Flitting about from one room to another, completing task after task, she tried to quiet that strange ache in her heart. Kris was to go away. They were to be separated.

Kris whistled and sang as he went about the house, gathering up all the toys. Millions and millions of toys he tossed into the magic sack, but it wasn't any heavier than when it was empty! He could swing it over his shoulder and carry it from room to room easily. It held toys for all the children in the world, but it was light as thistledown!

As the toys were taken out of each room, the young trees who had made that room slipped gently off the house and went back to the forest. How they scampered and ran, each seeking its own place back among its closest companions, and how glad the other trees seemed to have them back again.

Kristina wasn't happy. She was beginning to feel very lonely and to dread being separated from Kris. At last she had an idea. She would go with him. She would go the whole way and he wouldn't know until it was too late to turn back and send her home. Of course, that would be a very naughty thing to do, but surely, if a doll that looked like her would make a child happy, she should see that happiness. She had made so many, many Kristina dolls. Never before had Kris had so many treasures to take with him, and the sack was a magic sack so there would be room for her in it, too. If she hid herself deep down in among the

Kristina dolls, Kris wouldn't find her. He might take a look into the sack just before he closed it. Quickly she lifted out some of the Kristina dolls. She took them from that part of the sack which Kris called the "Poor Children's Corner." She put them in a drawer because she heard Kris coming. Later she would use them to cover herself, after she got into the sack. She was very excited, but the thought of not going brought tears to her eyes. "I'll do it," she said, setting her little chin. "I am going with Kris."

For the rest of the afternoon, she fluttered about helping Kris, and just after he brought his reindeer around to the front of the house, it was she who asked:

"Are you taking any of the trees?"

"I'd like to," he said.

"Ask them," Kristina urged.

"Very well, I will."

He and Kristina stood on the front porch and Kris called out:

"It's Christmas Eve, my friends. I'm starting off to make all the children in the world glad. Would any of you like to come with me? What great joy it would give the children to see my gifts hung on your gleaming branches!"

The great trees swayed and tossed about, nodding their heads and quivering.

"Think well," Kris urged, "for perhaps you will never return to this beloved spot!"

It was then that suddenly the biggest of the spruce trees spoke:

"Have no fear, Kris Kringle. It is Christmas, the season of good-will. To bring delight to mankind, we trees live! To you we dedicate ourselves." Then, in a great rolling voice, the big tree called out like a mighty general:

"Who of you will separate yourself from us and go into

the homes of humans to glorify their Christmas? For two days or two weeks, you must live indoors and away from the soil which is your very life. Of water you shall have none. Many of you shall wither and die from the enclosure, but those of you who can withstand the suffering for the sake of others have a chance to return here and dwell forever. Volunteers, stand forth!" The tree paused and was silent for a minute, which seemed an interminable space of time to Kris, then, softening its mighty voice so that it rang with pathos, it added:

"Kris Kringle, your Christmas trees will gladly go with you, but, as one man, we beg of you to have humans not throw us into old ash cans or back yards or by the river banks, for then we are lost forever. Ask them, in memory of you, to burn us so that, purified by fire, we may return to this great Paradise!"

And Kris nodded his head and said in a very solemn voice:

"I promise. Without you, my dear trees, and Kristina, this would be a most forlorn and lonely spot!"

Then the trees consulted among themselves, and soon a small army of young trees, slender and fine and hardy, ranged themselves near the sleigh.

"Into the sleigh!" called out the spruce tree, and all the other trees waved their branches and swayed while the volunteer soldier trees jumped into the sleigh.

As soon as all the trees who were going were in their places Kristina ran back quickly into the room. Hastily she jumped down into the magic sack among the Kristina dolls. Then she thought of that whole drawer full of dolls which really belonged to the poor children and which she had left behind. Her heart began to beat very fast and she began to push her way out of the sack again, but then she

heard Kris coming into the room. He called her but she did not answer. She heard him go to the door of the kitchen and call, but still she would not say anything. She heard him sigh, but still she did not make a sound, and then Kris came and closed the magic sack. Kristina held her breath and wondered what on earth would happen now. She hoped Kris would open the drawer and find the other dolls, but he didn't. He swung the sack over his shoulder and said:

"Dear little Kristina, she is so sweet and good. Why didn't she learn the secret of Christmas? I do so want to take her with me."

Kristina began to feel ashamed of herself. She had disobeyed Kris, and there must be some very great reason why Kris could not tell her that secret. Perhaps, if he had told her, he might lose all his power. That would be a terrible thing. What would he do with himself if he did not make toys for children? And how disappointed he really would be when he found out that she had hidden some of the Kristina dolls and left them behind. How sad some poor children will be if they don't get a Kristina doll! Kris certainly can't leave me to more than one little girl and I don't know that I really want to stay with any one little girl when I can help Kris make dolls that would make so many little girls happy.

"I mustn't go," she cried.

Then, with her tiny hands, she knocked and knocked on Kris's back, and she crept up in the sack till she was right on his shoulder and near his ears, and, calling just as loudly as she could, she pleaded:

"Kris, Kris, let me out, please!"

"Where are you?" Kris asked. And he put the magic sack on the floor.

"I'm in the sack, the magic sack," she cried.

And then Kris quickly unlocked the zipper fastener, and Kristina, her lovely hair all tumbled and tousled, and her big violet eyes wet with tears, jumped out of the sack and said: "Kris, I was going to go with you. I took out some of my Kristina dolls and made a place for myself."

Kris took her by the hand and he asked very gently and in his softest voice:

"Why didn't you stay in and go, then?"

Kristina shook her head; a tear trickled down her cheek. She went over to the drawer and took out the Kristina dolls and handed them to him and said:

"I couldn't bear to disappoint any child. Those dolls will make little girls happy, you said." And then from out the pocket in her dress she drew the first Kristina doll she had ever made. It was her treasure. "Give this to some poor child," she said, her little mouth trembling. "And if it makes her happy, I'll be happy, Kris."

"Why, Kristina! Do you mean you want to give up your treasure to any child?"

She put her head against his coat.

"Kris, Kris, dear, I want to give."

Kris lifted her up in his arms and swung her high to the ceiling, rocked her back and forth, and his cheeriest, most mellow, hearty laugh rang out.

"Kristina, Kristina," he shouted, "you've discovered my secret. The Spirit of Christmas is the joy of giving, of giving not only to the nearest and the dearest, but to everyone. You're coming with me!"



THE CHRISTMAS JOURNEY

IT WAS getting very dark, and the stars were beginning to shine in the velvety sky. The reindeer pawed the ground with their tiny hoofs and jingled their sleighbells impatiently. Kristina put on her little hat, and Kris helped her with her coat, and then he flung the magic sack over his shoulder once more and they went out to the sleigh.

As soon as Kristina was tucked in on the front seat, Kris took the driver's place, and called out cheerily:

"On, Dasher! On, Dancer! On, Prancer and Comet! Run, Vixen! Fly, Cupid! On, Donder and Blitzen!"

The reindeer kicked and scurried and dashed and danced. The sleighbells tinkled joyously, and the Four Winds came

to help and do their bit. Kristina hung on to the sack, and she was smiling a very happy smile. Kris whistled a carol.

Kristina noticed that Kris, every now and then, glanced up at the sky as though he were looking for something special there. Suddenly, a great star, whiter and more brilliant than any other star, gleamed and glittered in the sky. The minute Kris saw that star, he rose, took off his hat, and bowed.

"Hail, Christmas Star!" he said. "Again I follow you!"

Then the star grew brighter. It twinkled and twinkled just as though it were sending a message. Kristina heard Kris catch his breath as the star flashed once, twice, three times, and then so many quick flashes that Kristina could not possibly count them.

"Ah, ah, yes, Christmas Star! I do your bidding," Kris said. "New York, London, Berlin, Paris, Tokio, Chicago, China . . ."

Kristina couldn't hear all the names and places that Kris rolled off his tongue so glibly, but now she learned that on Christmas Eve Kris Kringle has a wonderful power: Guided by the Christmas Star, he is in all countries and all places just as the clock strikes midnight.

In every country, in city and town and village, she saw that there were always some houses that looked different from the others. Some had crosses on them; some hadn't. Sometimes these houses were very simple, and sometimes they had very pointed tops.

And when the clock struck midnight, from all these different houses there came the chime of bells, ding, dong, ding, dong, ding, dong, ding, they pealed. They were playing a tune—a tune she knew. She had heard Kris whistle that tune often while he made toys. It was a carol.

"Kris, Kris," she said. "that is your carol. All the bells



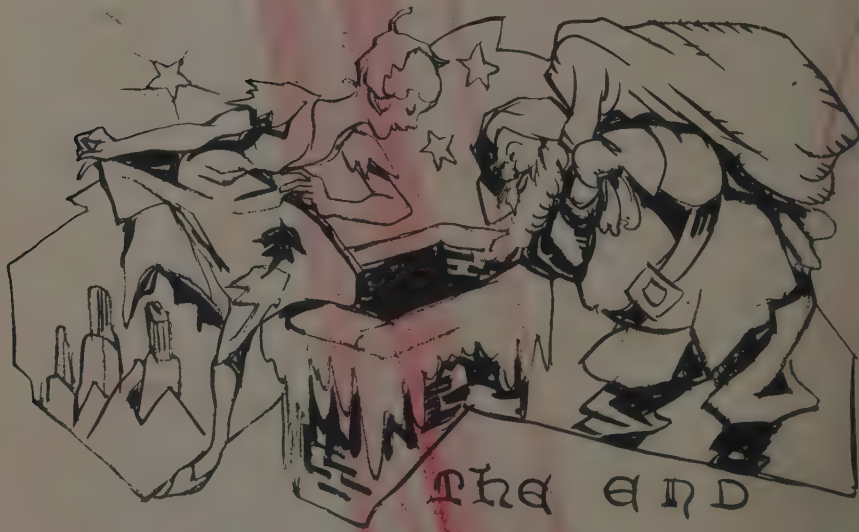
THE HERO OF OUR STORY

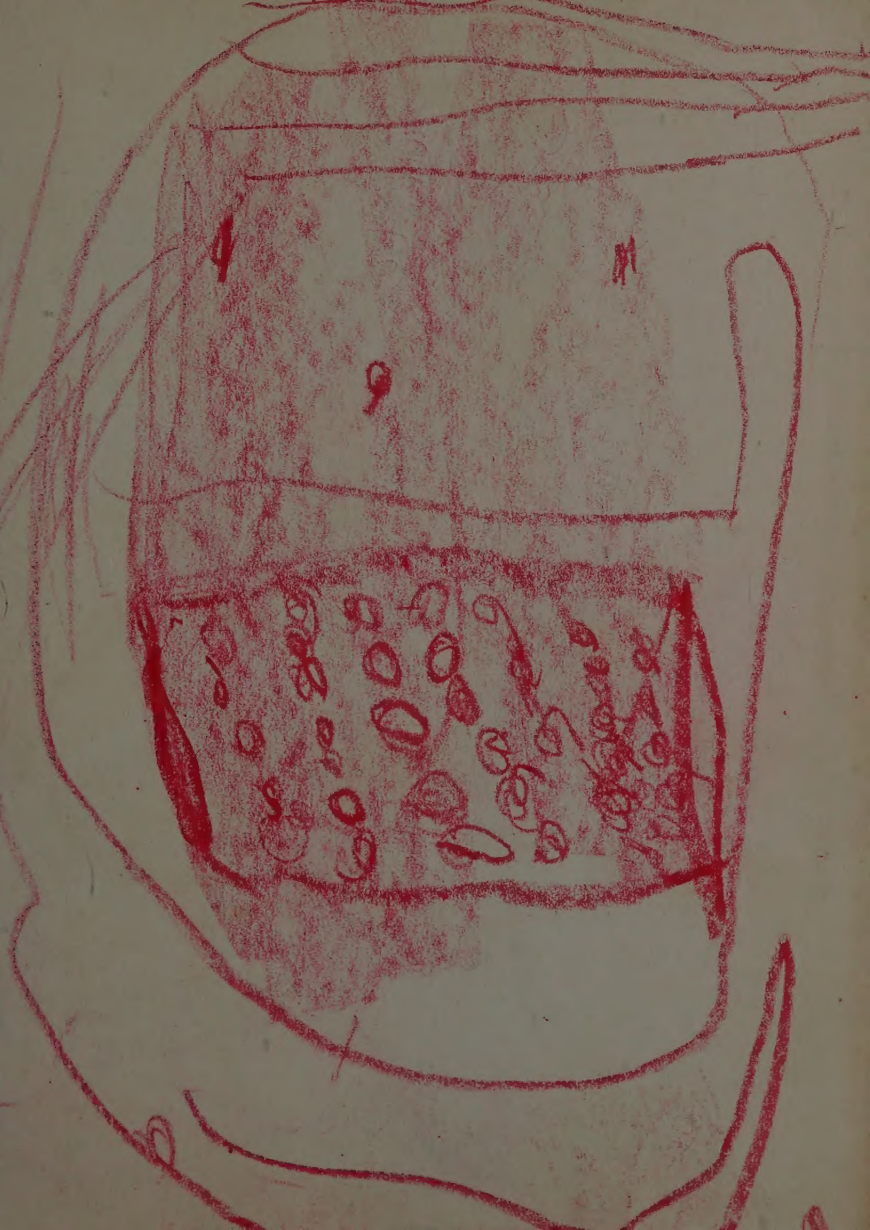
all over the world are ringing out to welcome you. Teach me the words of that carol, please."

And then lustily, cheerily, in his deep voice, Kris Kringle sang his greeting to the music of the bells:

"Peace, good-will, and happiness to all the world," he sang, and Kristina joined him; and as they reached the end of their joyous song, Kris took up his pack, put it on his shoulder, and, taking Kristina by the hand, he said:

"Come, my dear, I want you to see my dear little friends, but you mustn't make a sound," and down they both went into a chimney.





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